

Old Swinford Hospital

Heath Lane, Stourbridge, DY8 1QX

Inspection dates 6–7 and 13–15 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Overall effectiveness of the boarding experience		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Most students reach exceptionally high standards in English and mathematics at GCSE and in their A levels.
- Their attitudes to work are exemplary and they show a very high level of commitment to their studies.
- Teaching is mostly good or better. Teachers have very good subject knowledge which they apply through effective questioning of students to check their understanding.
- Leaders and managers know the school very well and are highly focused on achieving improvements.
- Students benefit from a very extensive range of additional activities that complement their learning in the classroom.
- The governing body is diligent in carrying out its responsibilities well and holding the school to account for its performance.
- Arrangements for the safeguarding and welfare of students are good and ensure that students are in a secure environment ready to learn.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In a few instances teaching requires improvement where teachers spend too long speaking to the whole class. This does not always give students time to demonstrate what they have learnt.
- There have been a few instances of misbehaviour outside the classroom.
- There is some inconsistency in subject leadership. Not all are tracking pupil progress rigorously enough or sufficiently checking if the quality of teaching meets the needs of all groups of learners.
- The range of courses offered to students does not fully match the needs of a small minority of students.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons, of which three were jointly observed with either the headteacher or a senior leader. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons. Inspectors also visited boarding houses.
- Meetings were held with groups of students, members of staff including senior and subject leaders and members of the governing body. A telephone call was held with the Vice Chair of the Governing Body, as the Chair was unavailable. The school's external adviser was also unavailable but telephone calls were held with two representatives from the local authority, one who has responsibility for looked after children and the other for safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of 152 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View and 22 responses to the staff survey.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including the school's own data on students' recent attainment and progress and recent minutes of the Governing Body.
- Inspectors also looked at documentation relating to school planning, performance targets for staff, safeguarding, the school's monitoring of teaching, behaviour and attendance, and evidence of support for students identified as needing extra help.

Inspection team

Mark Sims, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Robert Steed	Additional Inspector
Terence Payne	Additional Inspector
Janet Catto	Additional Inspector
Peter Hylton	Social Care Inspector
Robin Whistlecraft	Social Care Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportion of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, for whom the school receives additional income (the pupil premium), is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs, who receive support through school action, is above that found nationally. The proportion of these students who receive support through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is well below the national average. Each individual's identified special need is different.
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average, although the percentage known to speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- The large majority of students are boarders. Students join the school from other parts of the United Kingdom and abroad. A very small proportion of the students are selected on ability and the rest are selected by suitability to board. Students are admitted to the school either in Years 7, 9 or 12. A quarter of students in the sixth form are girls, none of whom board.
- The Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body are both new in post since the last inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is always at least good and often outstanding by ensuring teachers are consistent in:
 - allowing students enough time in lessons to demonstrate their learning
 - planning for students to find out things for themselves through group work or individual research during lessons
 - providing activities that allow extension work for the most able students and take account of the starting points of the small minority who find learning difficult
 - marking students' work in a way that lets them know how well they are doing and how their work can be improved.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by making sure:
 - courses offered to students at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form reflect the needs of all students, especially those who find learning difficult
 - data is used by all leaders to check more closely the performance of different groups of students
 - all subject leaders are involved in checking the quality of teaching more regularly so they can share the very best practice more widely.
- Work closely with students in the boarding provision to:
 - ensure students have greater opportunity to report incidents anonymously
 - ensure that all students feel equally valued, whatever their abilities.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Students who join the school at Year 7 have already reached standards in English and mathematics that are well above the national average. These very high standards are maintained as they progress through to GCSE where the proportion of students achieving the highest possible grades in English, mathematics and a range of other subjects are well above the national average. Current Year 11 and 13 students are on track to do equally well.
- Very many students achieve the highest possible GCSE grades and are not constrained by being entered for examinations too early.
- Students excel in their learning, especially in lessons where teaching is at least good. Even in the small proportion of lessons that require improvement, they continue to stay focussed on their work. This is because of their outstanding attitudes to learning and their self-motivation to do well. Most of them also have considerable time during 'prep' after school to continue their studies individually.
- All groups of students do very well in their learning, including those eligible to be supported through the pupil premium funding. At the end of Key Stage 4 the average points scores in English and mathematics of the very small number of students on free schools meals or looked after is significantly higher than that for all students nationally. Achievement is exceptionally high for boarders because the school is able to look after their welfare around the clock ensuring there are no external barriers to hold back their learning.
- Students with disabilities or special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds including those learning English as an additional language make very rapid progress in line with their peers, enhanced through very effective additional support.
- The exceptional care and guidance that students receive, combined with an unrivalled selection of enriching after school activities and trips, ensure that these experiences contribute to their very high level of achievement.
- Students who join the school in Years 9 and 12 come from more varied starting points but still make excellent progress as they settle in quickly to the working environment of the school.
- Outcomes are very high in almost all A level courses offered. Very high numbers of students go on to the sixth form and university because they are very well prepared for the next steps in their educational journey. They apply their advanced reading and numeracy skills to other subjects very well. The percentage of students who stay on to complete courses in the sixth form is very high.
- Almost all parents who responded to the online questionnaire said their child was making good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have very a high level of subject knowledge and all are well qualified to teach their subjects. Consequently, their explanations and practical demonstrations are clear and precise and their questioning is skilfully designed to elicit students' understanding and check their

progress.

- Students are working at levels well above that expected nationally, even in lower sets, as teachers set challenging work for them to do. Teachers' high expectations are apparent in the large majority of lessons. Relationships between teachers and students are consistently good and teachers know their classes well.
- In the very best lessons teachers go further in allowing students the chance to make choices about their learning and take a greater responsibility for their work; for example, warming up in gymnastics, researching and planning an investigation in biology or carrying out role play interviews in languages lessons. Consequently, group or pair work and practical activities feature significantly in these lessons. Students develop advanced thinking skills and make very rapid progress in their learning in these lessons.
- Where teaching is at least good, teachers plan work that is suitably challenging for different groups including students with disabilities or special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. This enables all groups of learners to succeed. Where additional support is available, it is deployed well in lessons although not all additional adults are sufficiently involved in planning with teachers.
- At its best, marking clearly shows students what they have achieved and how they could improve. Students themselves enter into a written dialogue with teachers responding to their questions and prompts. In some instances marking is less clear for students and is restricted to brief praise comments.
- In the small proportion of lessons that require improvement, teachers spend too long introducing activities or explaining concepts, providing answers to students rather than allowing them to find out things for themselves. In these lessons the activity is aimed at the whole class and does not take enough consideration of students' different starting points or their previous learning.
- Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well through, by drawing on students' own diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences, for example, studying dance styles from around the world and poems from Africa.
- Nearly every parent who responded to the online questionnaire said their child was taught well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in lessons is often outstanding regardless of the quality of the lesson. Students remain eager and enthusiastic even when, on occasions, the pace of the lesson is slow.
- Students get on well with each other socially and in lessons. When girls join in the sixth form they are welcomed and integrated well. Students work cooperatively in groups and individually support each other in their learning.
- The promotion of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, as seen in their strong support for charities such as 'Help for Hugo' and positive attitude towards those from different backgrounds. Students themselves see the diversity of the school population as an asset for the school. In the wider world, their link with a school in Uganda enhances their understanding of issues such as fair trade in developing countries. They are keen to celebrate each other's successes.

- Students said overwhelmingly in discussions that they felt safe in school and that bullying of any type, including racist, cyber and homophobic bullying, was not a significant issue. Were an event to occur they were secure about reporting it in the certainty that prompt action would be taken. Incidents are very rare but any that do occur are logged thoroughly and followed up promptly. Students know how to avoid potentially unsafe situations through the personal development programme which they value highly.
- Most students behave well outside of lessons. However, bullying has taken place in the boarding provision and the school dealt with this well, in conjunction with the police and local authority. The school was praised by the external agencies for how it dealt with this incident. It has since reassessed and tightened its procedures to minimise further risk.
- The last permanent exclusion was in January 2011. Fixed term exclusions are very low.
- Students thrive on taking on responsibilities. The student council contributes to decisions in meetings with senior leaders and governors as well as providing feedback on teaching.
- Uptake of additional activities in drama, music and sport is exceptionally high, including in the sixth form where over two thirds of students are involved in at least one musical activity.
- Attendance is much higher than the national average and on a rising trend. Clear structures are in place to deal swiftly with any absence that occurs and effective support is provided for the exceptionally small minority of students whose attendance is an issue of concern. There is no persistent absence and punctuality rates are exceptionally high.
- The highly popular reward system recognises students' achievement and involvement in school activities. The inter-house programme is valued highly by the students as it develops leadership and team skills. The house structure within the school, a key element of this boarding school, fosters allegiance and team spirit amongst students. An overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire said their child was happy. Almost all said their child felt safe at school and that the school makes sure their children are well behaved.

The leadership and management are good

- There is a shared vision to raise standards among the headteacher and senior leaders who work relentlessly to bring about improvements and ensure very high standards of achievement are maintained. Senior leaders know their school well and areas identified for improvement are appropriate.
- An extensive new tracking system is in place which enables senior leaders to check how well individual students are doing and to identify early those who are not meeting the challenging targets set for them. As yet, its full potential has not been realised for checking how different groups of students are doing or how students have performed over a longer time period.
- Senior leaders observe teaching regularly to improve the quality and are accurate in their judgements. The small number of lessons that still require improvement has been hard to shift and not enough teaching is yet outstanding. In performance management there is a close link between the quality of teaching and payment on the upper pay scale.
- All those who responded to the staff survey said they were proud to be member of staff at the school. A small minority did not agree that the school is well led and managed. Inspection evidence did not support this at a senior leadership level although there were some

inconsistencies in the quality of subject leadership. Subject leaders are involved in observing teaching but for a few leaders this process is more informal.

- Checking the progress of students with disabilities or special educational needs in lessons is less well developed. The responsibility for checking the performance of these and other groups rests more with individual teachers than senior leaders.
- An overwhelming majority of the parents who responded to the online questionnaire said the school was well led and managed. Almost all said they would recommend this school to another parent. They are able to express their views at regular parents' forums.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well through assemblies, for example on the theme of respect. A recent visit from a holocaust survivor gave students the opportunity to reflect on reconciliation.
- Arrangements to secure the safeguarding of students are comprehensive and meet all statutory requirements. The school deals effectively with the small number of recorded bullying incidents. The school works particularly effectively with the local authority over the welfare and support of looked after children. The school's rigorous procedures are used by the local authority for the training of other schools.
- The local authority is not involved in monitoring the quality of teaching, relying on examination results to form their judgement of the school. An external adviser holds the school to account through regular meetings and reports of progress which are an accurate reflection of how the school is doing.
- Training for all staff on meeting the need of different groups of students including those with disabilities or special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language is less well developed.
- Students have the chance to study a wide spread of courses including a number of languages. Courses designed around GCSE and A level subjects are appropriate for the large majority of students but not for a small minority. The school recognises the need to offer a wider range of courses for these students and is working well in partnership with a local college to achieve this. GCSE courses in the three single sciences of biology, physics and chemistry are not suitable for all students.
- Additional opportunities outside the classroom are excellent. All students have access to a stunning array of musical, sporting and drama activities as well as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Combined Cadet Force and the weekend and outdoor pursuits programme. There are numerous opportunities to travel widely overseas and the small pupil premium fund ensures that no pupil misses out on these additional enriching experiences which include trips as far afield as West Indies, South Africa and Argentina.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Governing Body is acutely aware of the strengths and weakness of the school and analyses student performance closely in order to challenge the school. It has very high aspirations for students, who are performing very well, to do even better. Governors are very supportive of senior leaders but also hold them closely to account. Governors are regularly informed regarding their responsibilities for safeguarding and are fully involved in decisions regarding policies. They are experienced and highly knowledgeable in the field of child protection and keep up to date with training. Governors know how the pupil premium is spent but are less involved in evaluating the quality of teaching. Not all are sure about the link

between teacher pay and performance.

Outcomes for boarders/Outcomes for residential pupils	are good
Quality of boarding provision and care/Quality of residential provision and care	is good
Boarders' safety/Residential pupils' safety	is good
Leadership and management of boarding provision/Leadership and management of the residential provision	is good

- The school meets all key national minimum standards.
- There are good relationships between boarders and with members of staff. Students make good progress in overcoming issues and developing their confidence and independence. Students have a positive experience of boarding and this is supported by the views of parents.
- Students make a strong contribution to boarding life through their representation on committees such as food and welfare. Prefects play a key role in the welfare of younger boarders.
- The medical centre is a strong feature of the school. Health care facilities are excellent. Fitness is promoted through a wide range of sporting activities. Food is balanced, healthy and nutritional and the school is working hard to educate all students of the importance of this. However, a number of students do not appreciate this.
- Most students behave well outside of lessons. However, bullying has taken place in the boarding provision and the school dealt with this well, in conjunction with the police and local authority. The school was praised by the external agencies for how it dealt with this incident. It has since reassessed and tightened its procedures to minimise further risk.
- Other recorded incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively and recorded well. All procedures are correctly followed and sanctions are swiftly issued. Students also receive counselling and support to prevent similar occurrences happening again. Staff are vigilant in ensuring students use school and personal equipment responsibly.
- Students receive good pastoral and academic support which encourages teamwork and responsibility. Those of different backgrounds are respected. Students say they are listened to by staff. A very small minority of boarders perceive that day students, who are selected on academic ability, are valued more than boarders who are not selected on ability. Conversely another very small minority perceive rugby is valued more than academic ability.
- All child protection arrangements are very clear. Procedures for safeguarding are good and as well as training its staff, the school trains prefects too. The school also provides training for others in the local authority. Boarders report that they feel safe and secure.
- Students know about policies and procedures for reporting incidents and they are aware of what constitutes different types of bullying. Students know who to report to within the school and they have contact details for all relevant outside agencies except the children's rights director.

Not all students are confident in coming forward to report incidents. An anonymised reporting system is under development to overcome this.

- Leaders and managers are clear and decisive. Boarders are well supported and cared for and regular account is taken of their views.

- Students are well prepared for the next steps in their education.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

Boarding/Residential provision		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	103870
Social care unique reference number	SC042055
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	403748

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	642
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	270
Number of boarders on roll	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Malcolm Wilcox
Headteacher	Peter Jones
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2010
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